Separate State for Vidarbha

2056. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a delegation comprising Members of Parliament and other leaders for Vidarbha called on the Prime Minister on September 28,1996, to demand a separate State for Vidarbha region;

(b) if so, the details of the plea made by them, indicating the grounds adduced by them in support of this demand; and

(c) Government's response thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The delegation pleaded for a separate State of Vidarbha on the basis of the recommendations of the State Reorganisation Commission.

(c) The Government is committed to distribution of powers and decentralisation of authority in political, administrative and economic spheres. There is no proposal at present for constituting smaller States.

Nuclear Non-proliferation project by IAEA

2057. SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the three Asian countries including India, warned the Vienna based International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) for its ambitious and equally controversial project to enhance the current nuclear non-proliferation system, at the annual meet of IAEA held recently in Vienna;

(b) if so, the details of the project and the grounds on which it was opposed by India;

(c) the decisions taken at the meeting regarding the projects; and

(d) the other decisions taken therein towards a fair nuclear disarmament?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI IK. GUJRAL): (a) to (d) Several Asian countries, including India, raised concerns at the proposed strengthening of safeguards under programme 93+2, currently under discussion at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). However, many countries believe that IAEA safeguards need to be strengthened. Agreement has been reached on implementing some measures, consistent with present legal authority. Discussions are ongoing on measures which require additional legal authority to be vested in the Agency. This programme is not a nuclear disarmament measure. The issue of strengthened safeguards has treaty application only to non-nuclear weapon states signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and not to countries such as India, which are not signatories to the NPT.

Gang with illicit links with Pakistan

2058. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJI-RAO SHINDE: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether a gang with illicit links with Pakistan has been busted in Delhi on September 22, 1996;

(b) if so, the details of seizures and persons apprehended in this regard, indicating the modus operandi of the gang and its Pakistani links; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to liquidate the gang and to prevent such activities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Delhi Police arrested two persons on the 22nd September, 1996 from opposite the Taj Hotel, Jama Masjid, Delhi and recovered 50 live cartridges from them. The U.P. Police had a day earlier arrested two other persons from Saharanpur from whom several revolvers and pistols alongwith cartridges were recovered. The investigations conducted in these two cases have revealed that the persons arrested at the two places had links with some Pakistani associates and the arms were being brought in from Pakistan for use in terrorist and disruptive activities in the country. A "coolie" working at Attari Border who was being used as a conduit for supply of the arms